DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 073 737 HE 003 812

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TITLE The Social Scientist in the California State Colleges: His Background, Orientations and Ideology.
PUB DATE 28 Oct 71
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Community College Social Science Association (1st, San Francisco, October 28, 1971)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; *Faculty; *Higher Education; *Professors; *Social Sciences; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Characteristics; Teacher Militancy

ABSTRACT

This document presents the results of a study designed to elicit characteristics of professors in the field of the social sciences in the California State Colleges. The findings of the study support previous findings related to other social scientists in other parts of the country. Highlights of the findings include: (1) Social scientists tend to be more liberal and radical in their political views than other faculty. (2) Along with professors in the humanities, social scientists are more tolerant and permissive regarding questions of student rights, campus rules, campus speakers, premarital sex, and other issues. (3) Social scientists are more research oriented than other faculty, including faculty in the natural sciences. (4) Social scientists are more likely than other faculty to see the provision of a broad general education as the main purpose of higher education, in contrast to other faculty who tend to endorse either the vocational aspects of education or the view of higher education as a path to self-knowledge. (Author/HS)

The Social Scientist in the California State Colleges: His Background, Orientations, and Ideology

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To be presented at the First Annual Convention of the Community College Social Science Association, San Francisco, October 28, 1971

One of the most frequently cited complaints in the literature on American higher education is that there is such a scarcity of empirical research on college faculty and on colleges and universities as functioning organizations. It is often claimed that professors have eagerly embraced the study of virtually everything but themselves and the institutions of which they are a part. Even in the recent surge of interest about higher education most of the work that has been done has been concerned with student protest rather than with the institutions or the people who operate them. It takes only a cursory review of the literature to support this complaint.

It is true, however, that the situation is starting to change. There is a growing body of research appearing in monographs and articles which is focused upon one or another aspect of higher education as an organization. At the level of major, large-scale research the series of studies issued by the Carnegie Foundation stands out in its concern with the institutional facets of colleges and universities. In addition, others outside of the Carnegie Foundation's realm have been making significant and stimulating contributions. Names which come immediately to mind in this respect are David Riesman, Christopher Jencks, and Edward Gross, although others could also be cited.

Studies of faculty are still less prevalent in the literature. Two very large-scale studies are now in process, but only a little data has been published from these to date. Specifically, these are studies done by Martin Trow and Seymour Lipset in the one case, and by Talcott Parsons in the other. Both are interested in providing thorough and detailed analyses of faculty characteristics, and when they are completed each will undoubtably be a very important contribution to our knowledge. At the moment, though, the researcher exploring a problem having to do with faculty is usually hard pressed to find much by way of prior work upon which to build.

These statements should not lead one to the conclusion that there is little general literature on professors or colleges. Quite the contrary. The journals dealing with higher education abound with essays about faculty members and colleges, but almost all of these presentations are statements of opinion, belief, or unsystematic observation. The central problem is not one of a lack of interest or willingness to comment, but rather one of a relative absence of scientific empirical study.

One of the lines of analysis that is emerging on faculty is that addressed to the problems of faculty cultures. That is, some of the present work that is being conducted has taken as a starting point the idea that faculty are not a unitary group. This point was cogently brought forth by C.P. Snow in his germinal discussions of the "two cultures." Partially drawing upon his personal experiences and partially from his observations of friends and colleagues, Snow contended that an important and widening breach was developing between the sciences and the humanities. In Snow's view this separation was unfortunate, but at the same time very real and increasingly important. Without pursuing these points here suffice it to say that Snow brought to the open an issue which has stimulated empirical research on faculty.

Another scholar who emphasized the fact that major differences exist among college instructors was Alvin Gouldner. Using survey techniques in the context of a midwestern college Gouldner documented the existence of major differences among professors in terms of their orientations to their academic disciplines and their colleges. To employ Gouldner's terms faculties consist of persons with "local", "cosmopolitan", or intermediate commitments. The locals were those who saw their prime interests allied with those of the school, while cosmopolitans were those whose main attachments were to their discipline.

The experiences of most of us associated with higher education would, I am sure, tend to support the thesis that there are significant differences among

faculty members and that those are related to the academic fields. Professors of physical education are normally quite unlike instructors in art, and the differences between them tend to be diffuse. Thorough analyses of such differences, however, are somewhat rare; and even more scarce are studies that examine the consequences of such differences, especially as these affect the educational process, students, institutions, or the integration of the academic community.

In years of rapid growth and internal change orientational divisions have also come to play important parts in the character of colleges. The running battles that are waged on many campuses between the "vocationalists" and the "academics" are but one illustration. Similar conflicts take place between "educationists" and those in the "liberal education" groups; and between "activists" and "traditionalists." Granted that such orientational schisms do not inevitably correspond to disciplinary boundaries, it still grows from observation that each of the orientations is not randomly distributed among people in all corners of a campus. The proportion of faculty with an "activist" orientation in departments of engineering, home economics, or business is undoubtably much lower than one would find in sociology, political science, or English. Similarly, one would not anticipate finding many instructors with "academic" leanings in departments of industrial technology, nor many "vocationalists" in departments of philosophy.

These general and almost common sense statements are based more upon casual observation than careful and orderly analysis. Further, these observations merely describe broad areas of difference, without making any attempt to explain their origin or significance.

There are at least three good reasons for singling out social scientists as the central group for an analysis of this sort. First, the significance of the social sciences in American higher education has never been greater. The strong interest of students in the disciplines making up the social sciences has been demonstrated by the rapidly expanding enrollments in departments of anthropology, psychology, political science, sociology, history, geography, ethnic studies, and even economics. Thus, the influence of professional social scientists upon the present student generation is well worth examining, if for no other reason than its potential effects. Second, the general importance of the social sciences in the broad society has been increasing and this has been reflected in the shaping of societal policy. Given this impact it is helpful to be better aware of the characteristics of those at the core of these sciences. Finally, for purposes of this paper social scientists were chosen as the focal group because I felt that such an emphasis was appropriate to a national convention of this sort and probably would be of more interest than an analysis dealing with natural scientists or professors of education.

The data upon which the remainder of this discussion rests was collected in two separate surveys of faculty members within the California State College system. Each of the surveys was primarily concerned with the question of faculty views on collective bargaining, but each was designed to yield a good deal of information which could be examined for other purposes.

The first of the surveys was done in the Spring of 1968 and included a fifty percent sample of the full-time faculties of four northern California State Colleges. The second study was much broader in scope, including administrators as well as faculty, and the survey phase of the work was done in January, 1970.

In the 1968 survey a total of 1,106 professors were sent a questionnaire, and of those 497 (approximately 45 percent) replied with useable responses.

An examination of the responses vis a vis the characteristics of the sample, and vis a vis the total faculty population of the four colleges surveyed revealed that the respondents were generally representative.

The ,total sample for the 1970 survey numbered 1,500 faculty. Useable responses to the mail questionnaire came from 835 professors, or 56 percent of those surveyed. Again, an analysis of the respondents indicated that along the lines where comparisons could be made they were closely representative of the sample.

In brief, the data which will be presented can reasonably be assumed to be accurate for the faculties of the California State Colleges. It is not known, however, to what degree generalizations can be made from the population of C.S.C. instructors to the overall community of faculty, and it is because of this that the present study does not attempt to set forth any statements with broader applicability than the C.S.C.

It would be erroneous to say that there has been no empirical work on faculty cultures to use as a stepping off point for the analysis to follow. Three studies have dealt with the issue, although each in somewhat different ways. These are: 1. Lionel Lewis, "Two Cultures: Some Empirical Findings", Educational Record, 48, Summer, 1967, 260-267; Charles Spaulding and Henry Turner, "Political Orientation and Field of Specialization Among College Profes- s. s", Sociology of Education, 48, Summer, 1968, 247-262; and Jerry Gaff and Robert Wilson, "Faculty Cultures and Interdisciplinary Studies", The Journal of Higher Education, 42, March, 1971, 186-201.

Drawing upon the conclusions of these studies one can begin with the following generalizations about social scientists:

1. they tend to be more liberal and radical in their political views than other faculty

2. along with professors in the humanities, they are more tolerant and permissive regarding questions of student rights, campus rules,

campus speakers, premarital sex, and other issues.

3. they are more research oriented than other faculty, including faculty in the natural sciences.

4. they are more likely than other faculty to see the provision of a broad general education as the main purpose of higher education, in contrast to other faculty who tend to endorse either the vocational aspects of education or the view of higher education as a path to self-knowledge.

Using the survey data cited earlier the present discussion will begin by seeing if these general characteristics hold within the C.S.C. faculty group.

Political Ideology

The data from both of the C.S.C. surveys supports the conclusions of the other studies that social scientists tend to be more liberal or radical in their political orientations than other professors. The findings on this point are provided in Table 1.

From the figures in the table it can be seen that although social scientists are more "left" in their political ideologies than other faculty they are much more unlike their colleagues in the professional fields than instructors in the other liberal arts disciplines (humanities and natural sciences). Nonetheless, even within the liberal arts category social scientists differ significantly from the other teachers.

The possible causes of these differences will be discussed later, but the marked degree of their presence goes a long way in helping to explain conflict that often exists between faculty in the social sciences and those in other areas. That is, the high proportion of persons of liberal and radical bent among social scientists often makes their courses and program suspect in the eyes of other professors, especially faculty in business and engineering where the ideologies of the instructors are almost the opposite to those of social scientists.

The political and social leaning of social scientists is institutionally

expressed in their political party identifications. Findings from the 1970 survey on this point are shown in Table 2. To a much greater extent than is true for others the social scientists state a preference for the Democratic party, and again they differ most in this regard from the faculty in the professional fields. Interestingly however, the percentage of social scientists indicating "other" or "neither" choices is not much different from that of professors in the other groups. Thus the political and social ideological bent of the social scientists is not aimed at "dropping out" or rebelling against the political mechanisms of the society, but rather is channelled through the existing political structure.

This high affinity of social scientists for the Democratic party adds to the degree of difference between persons in the field and others, although in terms of campus behavior it probably merely reinforces the "leftist" image of social scientists held by other faculty.

Academic Orientation

The work of Gaff and Wilson and that of Lewis indicated that social scientists are more research oriented than other faculty. Again the present data reinforces this finding. Table 3 contains the findings on the point.

The relative difference between natural and social scientists in their orientation is quite interesting. One would expect that given the heavy emphasis upon research in the physical and biological sciences professors in those fields would be among the most research oriented of college faculty. Also, given the more liberal political leanings of social scientists one would anticipate that they would be more teaching oriented.

What could be at work in producing these differences, of course, is a process of selection in the college teaching career. That is, the more research oriented natural scientists might be more prone to taking positions with government or industry where well-financed research facilities are available, or at

least they may be less likely to join state college faculties, since research is less emphasized and less well supported outside of the major universities. In the instance of social scientists no broad range of research options exist outside of the academic world. In addition, even if such opportunities were available, given the political ideologies of most social scientists, they might not be attractive. That is, the social scientist might be more likely to view working for industry or the government in research as providing help to the Establishment in its efforts to maintain the status quo.

In any case, these differences in academic orientation coupled with those cited before serve to further distinguish the social scientist from faculty in other fields.

The question of general educational orientation was also pursued in the 1968 and 1970 studies. The persons sampled were asked to indicate their main commitments in terms of six possibilities, ranging from the area of education generally to that of their academic discipline. Table 4 reports the responses to this question.

It is interesting that in spite of other orientational and ideological differences social scientists are quite close to the other fields in terms of their prime commitments. The table does, of course, demonstrate a number of specific differences between persons in disciplinary areas, but overall social scientists are very close to the norm on these items. Especially within the liberal arts fields there are high degrees of similarity among faculty.

Other lines of analysis were also followed in each of the studies, particularly on the question of satisfaction. Most of these did not yield any data which would distinguish social scientists from other professors. Social scientists were essentially the same as other faculty in their satisfaction with their discipline as a career choice, with college teaching as a career, and with their present colleges. When further asked their assessment of the

present quality of most college teaching social scientists did not express any higher or lower levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction than others.

When asked questions dealing with academic governance and the current economic and social state of the profession of college teaching, social scientists did stand out. The proportion of social scientists dissatisfied with the administration of their local colleges was slightly higher than the norm, but not significantly so. When the C.S.C. sample was asked, however, its satisfaction with governance at the statewide level, social scientists were found to be the most dissatisfied of all faculty groups. Again, they were closer in this view to their colleagues in the liberal arts, but even within that grouping the social scientists stood out as the least satisfied. This focusing of discontent on the statewide level probably reflects a greater awareness by professors in the social science fields of the workings of government and the play of political pressures at the statewide level of governance.

This unhappiness with statewide governance in the State Colleges is also seen in the higher percentages of social scientists (and faculty in the humanities) who believe that greater militancy is necessary to deal with the problems of college teachers. Sixty three percent of the social scientists, and sixty seven percent of those in the humanities, endorsed the belief in greater militancy, compared to thirty eight percent of those in business, forty percent of the respondents in engineering, and forty three percent of those in other professional areas.

The dissatisfaction and support for militancy is not aimless or diffuse. Instructors in the social sciences (and the humanities) favor the establishment of collective bargaining for faculty to a substantially greater degree than professors in other fields. Seventy percent of the social scientists and seventy two percent of humanities teachers support bargaining. For the sample as a

whole the proportion holding this view was 61 percent. Another measure of this perspective is the degree of A.F.T. membership among the professors, and as one would expect higher percentages of social scientists and humanities faculty were union members. The proportions belonging to a more professional, less bread and butter group, the A.A.U.P. were not markedly different when social scientists were compared with other instructors.

Thus as in the case of political ideology the academic dissatisfactions of social science faculty are given direction through available institutional structures, in this instances the teachers' union.

Background

Various studies of public school teachers have shown that political, educational, and social differences in perspective among teachers can be traced in part to the social backgrounds of the people involved. To pursue this point the social backgrounds of the faculty members were examined in terms of the main occupation of their fathers. The results are provided in Table 5.

Based upon this data it does not appear that social scientists differ significantly from the average for professors as a whole. No markedly higher proportion of social scientists come from manual or non-manual backgrounds than is true for most of the other groups. In fact, with only a few specific expections, most college professors tend to come from the various types of social backgrounds in very similar proportions.

A further analysis in terms of the educational level of the faculty members' fathers also revealed little differences among them. To the extent that any one group was especially distinguished in the analysis it was the engineers, who proved much more likely than other instructors to come from homes in which the father had a college degree (62 percent as compared to 43 percent for the sample as a whole).

The finding that professors in the various fields are quite similar in their backgrounds in consistent with other research on college faculty - if not with popular myths about professorial backgrounds. The consistency probably reflects the presence of important variables in the processes of occupational selection and socialization. That is, people who opt for careers in college-level teaching probably hold similar values which override the differences between the disciplines they choose. Also, these values are in turn quite likely to be the product of particular kinds of family and early childhood environments which survey data to date has not tapped.

The very great import of graduate training cannot be overlooked. During the graduate school years the person not only learns his field, he is exposed to intense socialization into the perspectives and values of the discipline. In addition he must demonstrate a commitment to these values. As a study of graduate training has shown those students who are successful in advanced programs are those who achieve these ends, while those who cannot or will not make the necessary commitments do not finish the programs. (See: Charles Wright, "Changes in the Occupational Commitment of Graduate Sociology Students", Sociological Inquiry, 37, Wintor, 1967, 55-62) Thus, the practictioners in any given discipline, being those who were successful in mastering the graduate requirements, could be expected to reveal high levels of similarity in educational, social, and political views.

The magnitude of advanced training is undoubtably great and if the data and the interpretation given above are correct it proves more important than background in shaping the orientations and attitudes of faculty members.

Conclusions

The findings of the present study are in agreement with earlier work on the subject of faculty cultures, and they reinforce these previous findings. The main distinguishing characteristics of social scientists which emerge from this work seem to be the general political-social-educational orientation

they hold. The orientation can be seen as resting upon a single core concept - liberality. The trait taken alone is hardly unique to people in the social sciences, but within these disciplines it assumes an importance well beyond its role in the other fields.

Liberality is evidenced in the political domain by the party affiliations and political ideologies of social science teachers. In the strict educational arena it takes the form of high degrees of tolerance of student behavior and one might expect a greater flexibility in educational style. When professional (employee) issues are considered the liberality of the social scientists appears in their higher than average representation in the teachers' union and in their marked level of support for collective bargaining.

Interestingly, the basic educational views of social science professors are not much different than those of other college teachers, save for the deeper commitment to research on the part of the social scientists. Further, with regard to local campus governance social scientists are only slightly more dissatisfied than other faculty. Indeed, such dissatisfactions as social scientists hold are largely focused upon the statewide level of coordination and control - a level where political issues and ideology tend to play a very important role in shaping educational policy.

Overall, the C.S.C. survey data underscores the presence of and importance of faculty cultures. It also shows, however, that the lines along which faculty schisms exist do not necessarily follow strict disciplinary boundaries. On the matter of main educational orientation, for example, divisions between "educationists" and "disciplinarians" appear within each of the faculty disciplinary groupings.

It is possible that the "education-discpline" division is more typical of state colleges than other kinds of institutions of higher education. At the university level, for example, one would anticipate that most professors are almost

totally commited to their disciplines, while at community colleges one would expect much stronger orientations to education. State colleges, with their traditions of being teacher training schools on the one hand, and their ambitions to become universities on the other, reflect this duality in the orientations prevalent among their faculties.

In any case, social scientists are neither so different from other faculty as some may believe, nor are they simply the same as all other professors. The concept of faculty culture must be viewed as multi-dimensional, with the various groupings aligning and separating depending upon the character of the problem or issue at hand. Stated another way, faculties are much like society as seen from the perspective of the political pluralist. Definite positions and poles exist and these are not random. Yet, the clusters which form to constitute a faculty culture on one kind of issue may be quite different than those which emerge on a second type of question.

Needless to say a great deal more research is necessary before stronger and clearer generalizations can be formulated on this subject. We can hypothesize that the present effects of coherent faculty cultures are very strong - in the impact they have upon students and in the integration of the schools themselves. The liberality of social science instructors undoubtably affects their students, much as the conservatism of business and engineering professors affects their students. The extent of this impact and its long-run consequences, however, remain to be studied, but it has undoubtably already been seen in short-run terms in the higher proportion of social science and humanities students who were active in student protest movements.

The current press for educational innovation is dependent in many ways upon the nature and strength of faculty cultures. In this area, however, the liberality of social scientists may make them more conducive to change, but their research orientation and their internal divisions in educational perspective, may mean that

only certain kinds of innovations can be carried forward in their fields. It also suggests, as Gaff and Wilson suggest in their article, that interdisciplinary innovation is much more likely to succeed through the combination of certain fields where the faculty cultures are similar than it is between areas where these cultures are markedly different. They predict this would be true, even though logic might imply interdisciplinary alliances along lines rather different from those supported by a similarity in faculty culture.

Clearly, much more research on faculty is called for. Studies of professors and instructors in all segments and types of institutions should be done. The data presented in this paper reinforces earlier findings, but also implies that not only are faculties not unitary, faculty cultures are themselves shifting and moving phenomena. Additional work, drawing upon the pluralistic model employed in the analysis of political processes would undoubtably prove fruitful in adding to our understanding faculty cultures and thus our understanding of ourselves.

Table 1
Political Ideology by Academic Discipline
(percent)

Political Ideology	Social Sciences		Natural Sciences		Humanities		Business		Education		Engineering		Other: Professional		TOTAL	
	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970
Conservative	3	3	7	9	3	7	20	22	6	10	8	12	11	14	7	9
Moderate	20	21	39	37	36	31	50	54	54	46	54	61	58	48	39	37
Liberal	63	65	49	52	56	52	23	22	38	39	38	22	28	33	48	47
Radical	13	11	5	2	5	10	6	2	2	5	0	4	3	4	6	6
Total:	99	100	100	100	100	100	99	100	100	100	100	99	100	99	100	99
N =	123	175	87	127	99	144	34	41	52	67	13	49	72	135	484	765

Table 2
Political Party by Academic Discipline
(percent)

Political Party	Social Sciences	Natural Sciences	Humanities	Business	Education	Engineering	Other: Professional	TOTAL
	1970	1970	1970	1970	1970	1970	1970	1970
Democrat	72	60	62	37	46	45	51	59
Republican	12	31	20	46	40	39	39	27
Other	3	2	2	2	3	4	3	3
Neither	13	6	16	15	11	12	8	11
Total:	100	99	100	100	100	100	101	100
N =	173	126	143	41	65	51	132	756

Table 3
Main Interest by Academic Discipline
(percent)

Main Interest	Social Sciences		Natural Sciences		Humanities		Business		Education		Engineering		Other: Professional		TOTAL	
	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970
Research	27	32	17	15	27	16	6	15	14	8	15	6	8	10	19	17
Toward Teaching	52	36	58	47	47	33	50	27	40	24	54	36	34	33	49	35
Teaching	21	32	25	38	26	51	44	57	46	68	31	57	43	57	32	48
Total:	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	99	100	100	100	99	85	100	100	100
N =	123	155	89	111	101	127	34	40	52	63	13	47	86	126	488	694

Table 4
Main Orientation by Academic Discipline
(percent)

Main Orientation	Social Sciences		Natural Sciences		Humanities		Business		Education		Engineering		Other: Professional		TOTAL	
	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970
Education	29	35	26	30	30	31	35	23	59	56	33	35	30	34	33	35
College Teaching	17	22	24	18	18	17	19	10	8	9		25	14	11	17	17
State College	4	0	2	2	3	0	3	3	4	3	0	0	1	0	3	1
Local College	0	1	0	2	0	1	3	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
Academic Department	4	2	1	4	2	4	10	62	8	5	0	6	6	10	4	5
Academic Discipline	46	39	46	43	47	48	29	101	22	27	67	31	48	45	43	41
Total:	100	99	99	99	100	101	99	39	101	100	100	99	99	100	100	100
N =	118	173	83	120	99	140	31		51	66	12	51	69	129	466	743

Table 5
Social Origin by Academic Discipline
(percent)

Father's main occupation	Social Sciences		Natural Sciences		Humanities		Business		Education		Engineering		Other Professional		TOTAL	
	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970	1968	1970
Professional	28	29	29	30	34	37	26	39	28	31	67	31	37	29	32	31
Managerial	23	13	24	12	23	12	37	10	20	14	8	20	18	8	23	12
Clerical-Sales	16	18	7	9	13	18	11	15	15	5	17	16	7	15	12	14
Skilled Manual	15	12	20	14	16	11	7	19	15	16	0	8	13	10	15	13
Semi-Skilled Manual	2	9	5	14	4	12	0	0	2	11	0	10	7	10	4	10
Service	9	5	6	5	3	2	4	2	2	0	8	0	2	5	5	3
Unskilled Manual	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	1
Agriculture	7	10	9	9	5	3	15	10	15	17	0	10	13	16	9	11
Other	1	4	0	6	1	4	0	5	2	5	0	2	2	5	1	4
Total:	101	100	100	99	99	100	100	100	99	101	100	99	99	99	101	99
N =	116	171	86	122	98	137	27	41	46	64	12	49	67	129	454	739